



Evergreen School Division

Box 1200 • Gimli, Manitoba • R0C 1B0 • Ph. (204) 642-6260 • Fax (204) 642-7273 • www.esd.ca

June, 2020

To: Evergreen Community
From: Roza Gray, Superintendent
Re: **COVID-19: PUBLIC UPDATE # 13**

The government continues to respond to the COVID situation by revising restrictions as per modified public health orders. We do not yet know which restrictions will be required for schools over the course of the next school year, and it is possible that over the course of the year the restrictions will change. Therefore, we will continue to plan for three scenarios: a) a return to in-school classes with restrictions, b) a blend of learning at home and at school, and c) continued learning from home.

In the event that the return to school in the fall will continue to require students to maintain 2 meters of physical distancing from others, significant changes will be necessary in the way in which we organize student learning, our physical spaces in schools, our transportation system, and other student activities. **It is our goal to have as many students as possible to attend school as regularly as possible. This will require the continued flexibility and support of families and staff.**

In the interest of continued transparency, and to support families in their planning, we share the following:

Transportation: If current public health orders regarding physical distancing (distance of 2 metres) remain in place, our capacity to transport students will be significantly limited. For example, a 72-passenger bus may only be permitted to hold only 12 students. Therefore:

- Anyone who does not require transportation services will be asked to let us know.
- Families who presently pay for transportation services (because the distance from their home to the school is does not meet the eligibility requirements) may not be provided this additional service.
- The number of pick ups and drop off locations per family will be limited to one location per run (i.e. one morning pick-up spot and one afternoon drop-off spot).
- Changes to drop off and pick-ups (due to childcare arrangement or other reasons) will not be possible.
- As it may be necessary to have multiple shorter bus routes per morning and afternoon, pick-up and drop off times will change.
- Although we will do our best to transport as many students as possible as often as possible, especially at the younger grades, it may not be possible for transportation to be provided daily.
- **Parents and caregivers are asked to plan for alternative transportation to provide themselves as much flexibility as possible.**
- **More information is not available at this time. We do not anticipate a final decision from the provincial government regarding physical distancing restrictions on buses until August. We will communicate any changes to families as soon as we are able.**

Programs: If current public health orders regarding limits to group size and physical distancing requirements remain in place, our programming will be significantly affected. For example, a typical classroom which presently holds as many as 25 students may be limited to as few as 10 students. Therefore,

- If we can transport all our students to school (given the transportation challenges listed above); students from the same class may need to be separated into more than space in the school building.



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- Student movement between schools for programs and activities may not be possible. This includes curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Optional programs, such as Junior Kindergarten, may not be possible (as this classroom space may be required for mandatory programs). Our schedule for the Kindergarten program may also change.

Timetable/ Calendar

- The provincial government has not yet announced decisions affecting the calendar, including when the school year will start
- The start and end times of the school day may need to be adjusted. If this change is significant, consultation with families affected will occur in August.

Safety Precautions

- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures will be in place.
- Parents/caregivers will be asked to screen children for respiratory symptoms before sending them to school.
- Reminders/ signage will be made regarding frequent handwashing and hygiene related to coughing/sneezing.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms and entryways/exits.
- If at any time, staff or students are showing symptoms of illness they will be expected to return home.

We understand that this communication raises more questions than provides answers. It is unsettling for us all to have so much uncertainty. We are doing our best to plan for a number of scenarios so that as soon as the health directives are communicated, we will be able to make quick progress on a smooth transition to the 'new normal'.

As we continue to work our way through this together, we wish to be clear about the guiding principles of our planning framework:

- *The physical health and well being of our students, staff and families is our priority.* We will therefore continue to follow the direction of health and government officials.
- *Student learning will continue throughout the pandemic.* We will plan for in-school, blended and remote learning. Our target will be to get as many of our students as possible to school every day.
- *Providing equity for students will require flexible and creative opportunities.* Students who need additional support, have complex needs or cannot participate in remote learning due to connectivity challenges will require special consideration.